

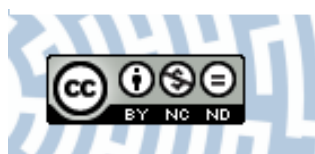


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## **The Portrait of the City in Wim Wenders's *Lisbon Story***

**ABSTRACT:** The paper addresses the depiction of the city in Wim Wenders's film *Lisbon Story* (1994). The film meditates on the "death of the cinema" resulting from the commercialization of the image and globalization of culture, accompanied by the destruction of space. Wenders protests against the postmodernist consumption and homogeneity of space by presenting Lisbon as a city arrested in time, beyond the impact of corporate culture. Expressing his distrust of images, he creates a heterogeneous portrait of the city, superimposing soundscape over the landscape, whereby sounds, particularly music, encode the emotional attitude to the city, experienced in a kinesthetic manner.

**KEYWORDS:** *Lisbon Story*, Lisbon, soundscape, kinesthetic

Wim Wenders's film *Lisbon Story* (1994) refers to two significant events in the European history: the end of communism and Federico Fellini's death. The film expresses an anxiety about the deindustrialization, a gradual shift to capitalist economy and globalization of culture following the collapse of the Iron Curtain in 1989. At that point, urban surfaces began to be subjected to the assault of visual cultures imposed by multinational corporations, which threatened to eradicate the visual distinctiveness of Europe. The corporate context of the image inclined the European film directors to reflect on their position as 'European' and as 'directors.' The digital cinema additionally undermined the status of image as the representation of reality as it enabled the creation of simu-

lated worlds in a computer, destabilizing the boundary between the real and the simulation. For some, the shift from the celluloid to the digital is tantamount to “the death of cinema.” In this context, *Lisbon Story* constitutes a reflection on the end of cinematic aesthetic whose power lay in image and its potential to represent reality; an era demarcated by Federico Fellini’s death in 1993. Wenders protests against the postmodernist consumption and destruction of space by presenting Lisbon as a city frozen in time, beyond the influence of corporate culture. Expressing his distrust of images, he superimposes soundscape over the visual aspect in his portrait of Lisbon, whereby sounds, particularly music, encode the emotional attitude to the city, experienced in a kinesthetic way.

After 1989 cinema has increasingly reflected the volatile urban landscape of European cities and their changing tissue. The cities are progressively more fragmented, cosmopolitan, with the dichotomy of the centre and the suburbs subverted. The introduction of new developments which disregard the cultural and historical heritage and/or human factor, and favour corporate profit instead, leads to the destruction of the unique specificity of the place and its distinct atmosphere. Globalization, building highways, the excess of shopping centres, fast food restaurants, banks and other multinational brands, entailing the separation of the place from its historical context, mark a shift from place to placelessness, from place to non-place. The city becomes the site of proliferation of simulacra, which serve the expansion of capitalist social relations and the lessening of the difference between “here” and “there.”<sup>1</sup> Private and public space, according to Jean Baudrillard, has been eroded by television and advertising, and hyperreal has taken over the real, simulating it digitally.<sup>2</sup> Postindustrial space is thus filled with commercials, graffiti, neons, logos, and billboards, which underlines the loss of historicity. The architecture constitutes a random mixture of styles from different historical periods, displaying the lack of integrity. These factors lead to the destruction of the sense of place and authentic place-making and

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1 See Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behaviour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 307–29.

2 See Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, trans. Bernard and Caroline Schutze (New York: Semiotexte, 1988).

result in the Disneyfication and museumization of place.<sup>3</sup> Rather than symbolic landmarks, artificial pseudo-places are created; in Baudrillard's words, "the waltz of simulacra and images,"<sup>4</sup> having little to do with geographical setting. The Disneyfication of space also encompasses the production of tourist attractions which are simulacra of "authenticity." Mass tourism is for Baudrillard one such simulacrum where the signs of tourism adopt greater value than the authentic experience. The tourist gaze is formed through superficial signs that are what a mass tourist looks for: "the signs of Frenchness, typical Italian behaviour, exemplary Oriental scenes, typical American thruways, traditional English pubs."<sup>5</sup>

Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli, writing in 2003, identified some common traits in the development of the cities of Europe in the past twenty years, concluding that almost each European city "seems to have developed its own, particular postmodernity, in accordance with its specific and original economic, cultural, social and ethnic history. [They] are all profoundly different and original, even if they all belong to the same global, late-capitalist society that has produced the postmodern condition."<sup>6</sup> Europe in transformation is referred to at the beginning of *Lisbon Story* when Philip Winter (Rüdiger Vogler), a sound engineer, drives from Berlin to Lisbon, summoned by his friend, Friedrich Monroe (Patrick Bauchan), to record the soundtrack for his film. Driving along identical motorways across Europe, either passing green fields or forests, or postindustrial landscape of neon signs, billboards, and logos, Philip reflects on the unification of Europe: "I realize that Europe is becoming a single nation. The landscape speaks the same language and tells stories of an old continent filled with war and peace."<sup>7</sup> However, rather

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3 Edward Relf after Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford, Malden, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 44.

4 Jean Baudrillard, *America*, trans. Chris Turner (London, New York: Verso, 1989), 67.

5 Jonathan Culler, "Semiotics of Tourism," *American Journal of Semiotics* 1 (1981): 127. See also John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage, 2002).

6 Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli, *From Moscow to Madrid: European Cities, Postmodern Cinema* (London, New York: Tauris, 2003), 24.

7 Wim Wenders, *Lisbon Story* (Road Movies Filmproduktion: Berlin, Germany, 1994).

than to the visual homogenization connected with capitalism, he refers to the unification of Europe based on shared values and “the ghost of history.”<sup>8</sup> In this respect, Wenders contrasts Europe with America and returns to the reflection on their relationship explored in his other films.

The distrustful response to the changes in visual technologies and fluctuating urban space is encapsulated in Friedrich’s creative crisis, rooted in his conviction about the corruption of images and the ensuing representative crisis: “images were telling stories, showing them, now they are only selling stories and things.”<sup>9</sup> This conviction has triggered Fritz’s project of shooting a movie about Lisbon with an old hand-cranking silent film camera, like Buston Keaton in *The Cameraman* (1928) and Dziga Vertov in *The Man With The Movie Camera* (*Chelovek s kino-apparatom*, 1929), “walking the streets and pretending that the whole history of cinema hadn’t happened.”<sup>10</sup> *Lisbon Story*, like Vertov’s film and other city films of the 1920s, explores the relationship between perception and the city. Similarly to Vertov, Fritz imagines the city as a stream of images, often disconnected from one another. The two projects display other affinities: they are both declared experiments attempting to unsettle the increasing similitude of cinema, and they are both made at historic moments: Vertov’s film just before the synchronization of dialogue, and Fritz’s (and Wenders’s) film at the threshold of the digital cinema. Vertov’s film constitutes the “document of the human eye in city” in which “an awakening of the eye: the iris of the camera and the lens of the projector” is blended with the awakening of the human eye that probes the city’s surfaces. Equally important is the eye of the viewer which transpires to be “a new component of vision” in the process of assimilating the city that appears and disappears in a “vast delirium of images” under the influence of rapid editing.<sup>11</sup> In this fashion, Vertov investigates “the capacity of the eye to generate and receive, at speed, the raw essence of revolutionary images.”<sup>12</sup> While he

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8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Stephen Barber, *Projected Cities. Cinema and Urban Space* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), 47–49.

12 Ibid., 48.

believes that the camera shows directly what he sees without distorting the image ("I am the camera's eye. I am the machine which shows you the world as I alone see it,"<sup>13</sup>), Fritz, sixty-five years later, recognizes it as impossible. He believes that the process of looking contaminates the image and engenders the disconnection of the image from the object it represents: "an image that is unseen can't sell anything. It is pure, therefore true and beautiful, in one word: innocent. As long as no eye contaminates it, it is in perfect unison with the world. If it is not seen, the image and the object it represents belong together. Yes, it is only once you look at the image that the thing in it dies."<sup>14</sup> Having lost the belief in innocent, authentic, and unique cinema, Fritz decides to eliminate the gaze altogether: he walks around the city and shoots randomly with the camera on his back. He subjects the city to the camera's eye, but not to the human one, producing thereby a kind of stream of camera's consciousness. He stores the films in a "library of the unseen image"<sup>15</sup> for future generations that will have overcome the polluting look. His position is thus that of Paul Virilio's "death of the eye."

To illustrate the aggressiveness of the camera that captures images to sell products, both Virilio and *Lisbon Story* demonstrate the relationship between the logistics of cinematographic perception and the logistics of battle field.<sup>16</sup> Fritz compares pointing the camera to pointing the gun, which, as an aggressive act, leads to draining images out of life, and results in "the city receding, fading further and further."<sup>17</sup> He thereby observes what Virilio has described as "the waning of reality"<sup>18</sup> registered by "the vision machines," which engenders the aesthetic of disappearance. To Virilio, "vision machines" constitute the outcome of "sightless vision," that is perception without looking that appears "itself merely the reproduction of an intense blindness that will become the latest and

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13 After Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 1989), 20.

14 Wenders, *Lisbon Story*.

15 Ibid.

16 See Virilio, *War and Cinema*.

17 Wenders, *Lisbon Story*.

18 Paul Virilio, *The Vision Machine* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press and British Film Institute, 1994), 73.

least form of industrialization: the industrialization of the non-gaze.”<sup>19</sup> To that blindness points Philip when he calls the kids who constantly look at the world through their camcorders, “*Vidioten!*” since their filming material does not undergo any process of selection or editing, but becomes an automated procedure. In Virilio’s terms, the camcorder appears “a removable and portable window”<sup>20</sup> through which they look out at the world. *Lisbon Story* thereby manifests itself as a meditation on “vision machines” and film image at the time characterised by its hybridity, designated by the celluloid and video, screen and monitor.<sup>21</sup>

### Multisensory Experience of Lisbon

Philip (and Wenders) attempt to prove to Fritz that “magic celluloid” can still be a powerful medium and images can give an authentic depiction of the city with their perceptual intensity and immediacy. Philip critiques Fritz’s project and calls his library of the unseen movies “disposable junk images” on which he has wasted his time, and associates it with the “European post-electral garbage”<sup>22</sup> Fritz has criticised before. The temporal anchor of the film is designated at the beginning by a farewell article in the newspaper, entitled “Ciao, Federico!” (the same words appear on the bedroom’s wall at the end of the film), however, Lisbon in Wenders’s film does not seem to belong to postmodernity. Although we see a glimpse of sordid blocks of flats and a row of billboards in the outskirts, the film mainly depicts Lisbon as a zone untouched by capitalist corporate culture. In a response to corporate and digital problematization of the relationship between the image and reality, Philip and Fritz, and Wenders, choose to present the city in a multisensory kinesthetic fashion.

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19 Ibid., 73.

20 Paul Virilio, *The Lost Dimension*, trans. Daniel Moshenberg (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 79.

21 Andrzej Gwóźdź, „Aż na koniec kina. O filmach Wima Wendersa” [“To the End of the Cinema. On Wim Wenders’ Films,”] *onet.pl Film*, July 8, 2007, <http://film.onet.pl/o,o,1054712,1,600,artykul.html>.

22 Wenders, *Lisbon Story*.

Kinesthetic experience of urban space, embedded in sensory perception, is rooted in phenomenological tradition, which deems the beginning of world perception in human body, predominantly in its diversified integrated sensorium, rather than in the schemes of thinking. The presence of the body “here” coordinates the experience of space, designates the axes of perception and measures existential distance.<sup>23</sup> Movement and time appear the main constituents of this type of experience, inseparable from space.<sup>24</sup> Experiencing the sense of place, apart from kinesthetic experience, as Yi-Fu Tuan maintains, must also engage other senses that will capture evanescent experiences, such as a distinct mixture of sounds, views, and smells, a special balance of natural and artificial pulses, like time of work and entertainment, sunrises, and sunsets.<sup>25</sup> Also for Barry Lopez the most authentic knowledge of place is multisensual and entails the rejection of assumptions and an analytic mind that would lead to fragmentary knowledge. Only through “becom[ing] vulnerable to a place” and opening oneself up, can intimacy and a sense of belonging be developed. To open up one needs to

actively use your ears to imagine the acoustical space you occupy. How does birdsong ramify here? Through what kind of air is it moving? Concentrate on smells in the belief that you can smell water and stone. Use your hands to get the heft and texture of a place—the tensile strength in a willow branch, the moisture in a pinch of soil, the different nap of leaves. Open a vertical line to the place by joining the color and form of the sky to what you see out across the ground. Look away from what you want to scrutinize in order to gain a sense of its scale and proportion [...]. Cultivate a sense of complexity, the sense that another landscape exists beyond the one you can subject to analysis.<sup>26</sup>

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23 Ewa Rewers, *Post-polis. Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta* [*Post-polis. Introduction to the Philosophy of Postmodern City*] (Kraków: Universitas, 2005), 67–68.

24 Ibid., 68.

25 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 183–84.

26 Barry Lopez, “A Literature of Place,” *The University of Portland Magazine*, Summer 1997, 25.



## The Visual

On the visual level, *Lisbon Story*, a mélange of a road movie, silent film, film within a film, *cinéma vérité*, and slapstick comedy, explores the topography of the city through the catalogue of small events and glimpses of its inhabitants' life and work, presenting Lisbon as the city of private routes, peripheral zones, and everyday activities, rather than symbolic venues. The stream of life includes yellow trams, boats on the river, pigeons at the fountain, laundry fluttering in the air, and cats prowling the quiet narrow alleyways. The inhabitants are engaged in old trades, uninfluenced by capitalism: washerwomen do the laundry by hand, a shoeblack unhurriedly cleans shoes, a knife sharpener uses an old grinder. People withstand any sense of feverish haste, walking at a leisurely pace, engaging in a chat with a stranger, riding a bike or a clanging tram, or drinking coffee in the sun. The rhythm of life is punctuated by church bells or the jangling of tram bells, rather than the clock time.

The unhurriedness of the city life is reflected in the unhurried manner of filming. Lisbon is shown in extreme long shots a few times, exposing the panoramic view of the coast and characteristic red rooftops, whereby the director conveys his sensory captivation and presses the viewer to marvel at the city. The camera lingers contemplatively on the river, street lamps, colourful buildings with flaked paints, countless leaning steps, the red Ponte 25 de Abril. The characteristic feature of Lisbon is the luminescent light, which appears on the screen the moment Philip crosses Portugal's border. Many shots are flooded with sunshine that in the film takes the form of natural lighting that the operator preserves and merely emphasises. Fritz's usage of a hand-cranker and the old-fashioned iris transitions in *Lisbon Story* itself serve to place the city in even further temporal distance from the hectic world of the end of the twentieth century.

## Soundscape

Onto the visual representation of the city the soundscape is superimposed, presiding over the other aspects of the film. Requested to "pull

[the] images out of their darkness” by means of sound so that they would “show the city as it is, not as I want it to be,”<sup>27</sup> that is, not carved to the needs of a film production, Philip deals with post-synchronization on location. It is through sounds that he begins to map the city: church bells, trams, pigeons, traffic, ships, the fountain, knife sharpening, washerwomen and conversations, conducting, in Henri Lefebvre’s terms, “rhythmanalysis.” Lefebvre writes about recognising various sounds, noises, and rhythms of the city from the perspective of the window. The cyclical, alternating rhythms of the city are combined with the linear ones, and both types convey “a multiplicity of (sensorial and significant) meanings.”<sup>28</sup> While recording from the position of the street, Philip isolates sounds from the polyrhythmic symphony of the city and augments them one by one, whereby “in place of a collection of fixed things, [he follows] each *being*, each *body*, as having its own time above the whole.”<sup>29</sup> According to Lefebvre, the characteristic dominant traits are “truly temporal and rhythmic, not visual,” and “no camera, no image or series of images can show these rhythms. It requires equally attentive eyes and ears, a head and a memory and a heart.”<sup>30</sup>

This supremacy of sound over image seems to be the enactment of Fernando Pessoa’s poetry which Friedrich reads, and which constitutes a commentary on the theme of the film: “I listen without looking and so I see,” or, “In broad daylight even the sounds shine.”<sup>31</sup> To prove that, Philip shows the neighbourhood kids he befriends that the world can be painted through sound without the necessity to resort to image—every time he produces a sound, the kids can tell a story behind it. The hyperbole of the sounds thus draws the viewer’s attention to them as they not only refuse to play a peripheral role in relation to image, but, more importantly, diminish its significance.

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27 Wenders, *Lisbon Story*.

28 Henri Lefebvre, “Seen from the Window,” in *Rhythmanalysis. Space, Time and Everyday Life*, trans. Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), 32.

29 Lefebvre, “Seen from the Window,” 31, emphasis in the original.

30 *Ibid.*, 32, 36.

31 Wenders, *Lisbon Story*.

## Music

Music accompanies sound in taking over the function of image in *Lisbon Story*. The music of Lisbon group Madredeus, who play themselves in the film, and their nostalgic songs, inspired by the traditional Portuguese fado and New Age music, seep through the walls to create the mood of nostalgia and to position Lisbon out of time. Music fulfills the function of a guide here and contributes to the deconstruction of filmic reality since the band assume the same status as fictional characters, and the elements of both worlds coexist on the same basis.<sup>32</sup> Occasionally, the songs serve as illustrative background but mostly, rather than develop the plot, they play autotelic role, legitimizing the music.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Wenders employs music to transgress the fixed conventions between diegetic and non-diegetic sound, resulting in the transgression of dialectics between representative images and non-representative musical elements,<sup>34</sup> which unsettles the conventional relationship between music and the filmic reality, between fact and fiction.

Music, and particularly the hypnotic voice of Madredeus's vocalist, Teresa Salgueiro, reveals the lyrical beauty of Portugal's capital. The city seems to unleash longing for love in the characters: Fritz expresses a Barthesian wish, "I'd like to fall in love with love," Philip reads Pessoa's diary from 1934 where he quotes the letter to Corinthians, "If I didn't have love..." and comments, "My God, I don't have love!"<sup>35</sup>; Teresa vaguely promises Philip affection when she expresses hope about their next encounter. This promise is highlighted by the fact that during the conversation they look at the city's rooftops that often serve as a site of romantic encounters in cinema.<sup>36</sup> Winter's feelings

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32 Marta Piotrowska, „Muzyka w filmach Wima Wendersa” [“Music in Wim Wenders’ Films,”] *Kwartalnik Filmowy* [*Film Quarterly*], no. 44 (2003): 135.

33 Piotrowska, „Muzyka w filmach Wima Wendersa,” 135.

34 *Ibid.*, 134–135.

35 Wenders, *Lisbon Story*.

36 See Patricia Kruth, „Kolor Nowego Jorku—miejsca i przestrzenie w filmach Martina Scorsese i Woody’ego Allena” [“The Colour of New York: Places and Space in Films by Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen,”] *Kwartalnik Filmowy* [*Film Quarterly*], no. 28 (1999): 124.

for Teresa add to the emotional portrait of Lisbon. She seems to be the personification of the city as her and the city's personalities go together like the river, "the only witness of our lives,"<sup>37</sup> and the song about it. Mysterious and charming, Teresa constitutes the embodiment of the spirit of the city.

## Kinesthesia

The portrait of the city is completed by kinesthetic experience which takes the form of perpetual wandering around the city. However, Fritz (and Philip) do not assume the stance of the nineteenth-century *flâneur* who, retaining emotional distance, moves around the flat scenery of the city, meant merely to be treated as an aesthetic object.<sup>38</sup> The figure of the *flâneur* encompasses the "convergence of new urban space, technologies and symbolic functions of images and products."<sup>39</sup> The postmodern version of the *flâneur*—as a metaphor of the situation of contemporary man's being in the world—is a consumer who walks around the "enchanted city," a product of landscape beautification, isolated from the poor, criminals, drug addicts, and prostitutes, to experience the city like Disneyland, having "the illusion of playing an active role on the kaleidoscopic urban stage."<sup>40</sup> In both cases the city is treated in a superficial way, marked by the impossibility to turn the destination of the journey into a "place."<sup>41</sup> That would entail granting space a "distinct identity which lets transform space into a 'place' that in turn lets place a man. Not only the place 'is' (in the broadest meaning

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37 Wenders, *Lisbon Story*.

38 See Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: New Left Books, 1973).

39 Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 20.

40 Mazierska and Rascaroli, *From Moscow to Madrid: European Cities, Postmodern Cinema*, 22.

41 See Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist—or a Short Story of Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), 18–36.

of the word) a fortified space, but also does an individual gain identity as ‘fortified I.’”<sup>42</sup> Anchoring one’s identity in the place is impossible in the case of the *flâneur*, then, for he exercises a superficial consumerist attitude to the city as an external observer and a collector of experiences and impressions.

In contrast, for Friedrich in *Lisbon Story* Lisbon manifests itself as his place of belonging. He is not a user of space, nor does he consume or collect the metropolis when he shoots his film. On the contrary, he feels coercion to present its authentic portrait as well as a desperate need to profoundly experience the city. His kinesthetic manner of doing that, characteristic of an active conscious observer who undermines traditional dualism, separating an idea from object and scenery from the body,<sup>43</sup> allows him to participate in the urban space with all his senses, plunge into it and interpret it. He experiences it in a total manner, that is, by means of all senses and a reflective thought. He “dwells” in the city in Martin Heidegger’s understanding of authentic existence: to dwell means to live in a place in a way that demonstrates respect and responsibility for the place, things and people in it, by means of which the need for home can be fulfilled.<sup>44</sup> The need for home and a sense of belonging to a place are “the foundation of our identity as individuals and as members of a community, the dwelling place of being. Home [...] is an irreplaceable centre of significance. [...] It is a point of departure from which we orient ourselves.”<sup>45</sup> The affectionate bond with a place is essential to one’s sense of the self; it is, as Edward Relph argues, “necessary and [...] as unavoidable, as close relationships with people, without such relationships human existence is bereft of much of its significance.”<sup>46</sup>

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42 Tadeusz Sławek, „Akro/nekro/polis: wyobrażenia miejskiej przestrzeni” [“Akro/necro/polis: Images of City Space”], in *Pisanie miasta—czytanie miasta*, ed. Anna Seidler-Janiszewska (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Fundacji Humaniora, 1997), 12.

43 Rewers, *Post-polis*, 68.

44 See Gregory B. Smith, *Martin Heidegger: Paths Taken, Paths Opened* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 183–84.

45 Relph after Peter Hay, *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd., 2002), 154.

46 After Hay, *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought*, 159.

To paint an authentic picture of the city, Fritz deems it necessary to “lose himself into the life of the city,”<sup>47</sup> and believes solitude to be a condition for that. On the sixth day of the experiment he recognizes the anchor of his house as an impediment to being with the live tissue of the city. As the house constitutes the base or pivot, Friedrich abandons it to live on the streets. Renouncing that protection lets him merge with the body of the city: “My view can glide over the city; my eyes can touch it as if they were hands. What I see and what I am become one.”<sup>48</sup> For Donatella Mazzoleni such experience of absorption becomes the conclusive “symbolic rite of metropolitan living”: “To immerse oneself. To be swallowed up. The space around us becomes gigantic, the body shrinks. [...] These are metropolitan experiences, in which are intertwined and reactivated memories, inextricably knotted into symbiosis at deep, pre-individual levels of life—those which precede birth.”<sup>49</sup> Yet, the distance between the character and the urban space obliterated, Fritz’s identity is threatened to be subsumed by the city. Mazzoleni collates the experience of the deprivation or engulfment of identity in the urban space to “life within the womb, a form of living without identity where the ‘I’ and the social space are indistinguishable.”<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, the rhythms of the city invade the rhythms of the body, and threaten its integrity. Fritz, having lost control over his art and belief in its authenticity and representative power, drifts in the womb of the city, dissolving into its layers, sitting, passive and depressed, in a small blue car somewhere in the suburbs. It is Philip’s friendship and their work on the film that return Friedrich to the world as shifting his position from passivity to action alters the influence of the city upon him, which turns from the threat into a protective organism. His personal space, previously engulfed by the city space, is returned to him and the city no longer exerts an intrusive engendering power over him.

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47 Wenders, *Lisbon Story*.

48 Ibid.

49 After John Brannigan, *Orwell to the Present: Literature in England 1945–2000* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 189.

50 Ibid.

## Conclusion

The poetic lyrical portrait of the city in *Lisbon Story* demonstrates that even in the consumer culture it is possible to take the position of an *auteur*. On the other hand, however, the film itself was financed by the City of Lisbon and produced to promote the city as the 1994 European City of Culture. Ironically, then, from the very beginning the film has been a product whose role has been to ‘sell’ the city to the potential visitors. It transpires that there is no escape from the commoditised world, and an artist must create with the awareness of the context of the capitalist culture, trying to strike a balance between (auto)expression and (auto)promotion. The director must negotiate their place in the changing culture, taking the new circumstances into account; otherwise their films might end up as “disposable junk images” without an audience.

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Sonia Front

### **Portret miasta w *Lisbon Story* Wima Wendersa**

#### STRESZCZENIE

Niniejszy tekst przedstawia portret miasta w filmie Wima Wendersa *Lisbon Story* (1994). Film wyraża refleksję na temat „śmierci kina” spowodowanej komercjalizacją obrazów i globalizacją kultury, której towarzyszy destrukcja przestrzeni. Wenders protestuje przeciwko postmodernistycznemu ujednolicaniu przestrzeni, pokazując Lizbonę jako miasto zawieszone w czasie, poza wpływem kultury korporacyjnej. Wyrażając brak zaufania do obrazów, reżyser tworzy heterogeniczny obraz miasta, na elementy wizualne nakładając *soundscape*, poprzez który dźwięki, zwłaszcza muzyka, kodują emocjonalny stosunek do miasta, doświadczanego w kinestezyjny sposób.

Sonia Front

### **Das Stadtporträt in *Lisbon Story* von Wim Wenders**

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der vorliegende Text schildert das Porträt der Stadt in Wim Wenders Film *Lisbon Story* (1994). Es ist eine Reflexion über den „Tod des Kinos“, als Folge der Kommerzialisierung von Bildern und der mit Destruktion des Raumes einhergehenden globalisierten Kultur. Wenders protestiert gegen postmoderne Vereinheitlichung des Raumes, indem er Lissabon als eine solche Stadt zeigt, in der die Zeit stehengeblieben ist und die außerhalb des Einflussbereiches der korporatistischer Kultur bleibt. Den Bildern sein Misstrauen aussprechend schafft der Regisseur ein heterogenes Bild von der Stadt, indem er auf visuelle Elemente die Klanglandschaften (*soundscape*) auflegt, dank denen Töne, besonders Musik, eine emotionelle Beziehung zu der kinästhetisch zu erfahrenen Stadt kodieren.